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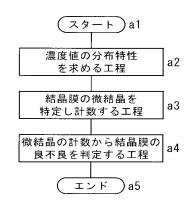
(54) 【発明の名称】結晶膜の検査方法および検査装置

(57)【要約】

【課題】結晶膜に発生し得る微結晶を正確に判定することが可能となる結晶膜の検査方法および検査装置を提供する。

【解決手段】帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布に関して、その分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜に発生し得る微結晶の有無を判定している。このように帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて濃度値の分布特性を求めておき、この濃度値の分布特性と結晶膜の微結晶発生状態との間の相関性を利用して、前記分布特性に基づいて結晶膜の微結晶発生状態を判定することができる。それ故、たとえばフーリエ変換などを用いることなく、結晶膜のたとえば導電性などの特性低下を確実に判定することができる。

【選択図】 図1



【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】

結晶膜を厚み方向一方側から撮像した画像であって、複数列の帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向を特定する第1工程と、

第 1 方向の濃度値の分布を表す第 1 濃度分布を求めるとともに、第 1 方向と交差する第 2 方向の濃度値の分布を表す第 2 濃度分布を求める第 2 工程と、

第2濃度分布の分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜における微結晶の有無を判定する第3工程と

前記第3工程の判定結果に基づいて、結晶膜の結晶化不良を判定する第4工程とを有することを特徴とする結晶膜の検査方法。

【請求項2】

第1工程は、

前記第1方向が含まれると予想される所定範囲内の複数方向に関して、前記複数方向のすちの一方向に沿った濃度値の分散を、前記一方向と交差する方向の複数の位置において求める第1段階と、

前記複数の位置において求めた一方向に沿う複数の濃度値の分散の平均を求める第2段階と、

前記所定範囲内の複数方向について、第1および第2段階を繰り返し実行する第3段階と

第3段階で各方向毎に求められる分散の平均に基づいて、複数方向のうちの1つの方向を 第1方向として特定する第4段階とを構えることを特徴とする請求項1に記載の結晶膜の 検査方法。

【請求項3】

第2工程は、

第 2 濃度分布に対し、前記第 1 濃度分布の平均値となる分布位置の濃度値の分布を表す平均値濃度分布を求める段階と、

平均値濃度分布に、予め定める濃度値以下の濃度値を排除する処理を行う段階と、

前記第2濃度分布に対し、前記第1濃度分布の累積相対度数分布の分布値が予め定めた値となる濃度値の第2方向の分布を表す相対度数値濃度分布を求める段階とを備え、

第3工程において、前記排除する処理を行う段階で求められる分布特性、および相対度数値濃度分布を求める段階で求められる分布特性から、微結晶化部分を特定することを特徴とする請求項1に記載の結晶膜の検査方法。

【請求項4】

結晶膜に光を照射する照射手段と、

結晶膜を撮像する撮像手段と、

照射手段および撮像手段を用いて、結晶膜を厚み方向一方側から撮像した画像であって、 複数列の帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向を特定し、第1方向の濃度値の分布を表す第1濃度分布を求めるとともに、第1方向と交差する第 2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布を求める濃度分布算出手段と、

第2濃度分布の分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜における微結晶の有無を判定し、この判定結果に基づいて、結晶膜の結晶化不良を判定する判定手段とを有することを特徴とする結晶膜の検査装置。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】

本発明は、結晶膜の検査方法および検査装置に関し、たとえば液晶ディスプレイパネルを 製造する際に、エキシマレーザーアニール処理を施して生成されたポリシリコン膜を検査 する検査方法および検査装置に関する。

[00002]

【従来の技術】

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液晶ディスプレイのアクティブ素子などとして用いられる薄膜トランジスタ(TFT:Thin Film Transistor)を製造するにあたっては、薄膜状のシリコン半導体を用いるのが一般的である。薄膜状のシリコン半導体は、非晶質シリコン(アモルファスシリコン)から成る非晶質シリコン半導体と、結晶性を有するシリコンから成る結晶性シリコン半導体との2つに大別される。

[00003]

非晶質シリコン半導体は、成膜温度が比較的低く、気相成長法によって比較的容易に製造することが可能であり、量産性に富むといった特徴を有するので、最も一般的に用いられている。しかし非晶質シリコン半導体は、結晶性シリコン半導体に比べて導電性などの物性が劣るので、高速特性を得るために結晶性シリコン半導体から成るTFTの製造技術の確立が強く求められている。すなわち基板の一表面部に、プラズマCVD(CVD:Chemical Vapor Deposition)法または減圧熱化学気相成長法などによって、アモルファスシリコン薄膜が形成され、固相成長結晶化工程と、レーザーアニール結晶化工程とを順次経て、結晶性シリコン半導体膜(以後、結晶膜と表記)が形成される。

[0004]

従来、エキシマレーザーアニール装置によって結晶化された結晶膜を検査する技術が開示されている(たとえば特許文献1)。前記特許文献1に記載の従来技術には、基板の一表面部に所定の方向性を有する光を照射し、一表面部からの乱反射光の強度を計測し、その計測値に基づいて一表面部の凹凸状態を判定する技術が開示されている。前記乱反射光の強度は、エキシマレーザーアニール装置におけるレーザー走査に起因する特定の方向性と周期性とを有する「すじ」の発生に着目したフーリエ解析によって計測される。前記一表面部の凹凸状態から、この基板の結晶膜は荒れていると判定されると、前記結晶膜は不良と判定される。

[0005]

ところで本願発明者が繰り返し行った実験によれば、エキシマレーザーアニール装置のレーザーエネルギー強度が大きくなるに従って、前記エキシマレーザーアニール装置によって処理された結晶膜を構成する結晶の粒径が大きくなり、結晶膜の凹凸状態は大きくなる。しかしレーザーエネルギー強度が所定の強度を超えると、結晶膜を構成する結晶は粒径の小さな微結晶となり、結晶膜の凹凸状態は小さくなる。前記微結晶は、粒径の大きな結晶に比べて、導電性などの特性が極端に劣り、結晶膜の特性を著しく低下させる。

[00006]

結晶膜に付与されるエネルギー強度が過大となった場合に、結晶膜が前記エネルギーによって完全に溶融し、冷却時に結晶核が高密度かつランダムに形成される。各々の結晶核から結晶が成長するため、結晶粒径がたとえば数百ナノメーターの極めて小さり結晶の集合となった前記微結晶が形成される。したがって、導電性などの特性が良好な結晶膜を得るためには、エキシマレーザーアニール装置のレーザーエネルギー強度は、微結晶の発生する所定の強度を超えず、かつ前記所定の強度に近り強度であることが望ましい。

[0007]

【特許文献1】

特開2001-110861号公報

[0008]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】

上述したようにレーザーエネルギー強度を制御することが望ましいが、レーザーエネルギー強度の制御精度には限界があり、レーザー照射の都度、たとえば約3%以上5%以下程度のレーザーエネルギー強度の変動がある。さらに前記レーザーエネルギー強度の変動時に、レーザーエネルギーが所定の強度を超え、微結晶を発生させた場合には、得られる結晶膜の前記特性は著しく低くなる。

[0009]

前記特許文献1に記載の従来技術では、レーザーエネルギー強度の変動による一表面部の凹凸状態の変動が、レーザー走査に起因する特定の方向性を有する「すじ」を発生させる

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ことから、前記「すじ」の発生に基づき、結晶膜の結晶化度を判定している。すなわち前記従来技術で用いられる「すじ」の判定手段では、結晶膜の凹凸状態に少なくとも一定の周期性があることを前提としている。前記周期性に基づいて、フーリエ変換を用いて結晶膜の結晶化度を判定している。しかし、エキシマレーザーアニール装置のレーザーエネルギー強度は必ずしも周期的に変動することはなく、実際に結晶化された結晶膜は、その凹凸状態に周期性が見られないものもある。したがって結晶膜の周期性に基づいて、フーリエ変換を用いて結晶化度を判定する技術は、汎用性が低い。

さらにレーザーエネルギー強度と結晶化度との間には、所望の結晶化度が得られるレーザーエネルギー強度よりも小さい領域で相関性がある。換言すれば、前記小さい領域において、レーザーエネルギー強度が大きくなれば、結晶膜の結晶化度は高くなる。しかし、所望の結晶化度が得られるレーザーエネルギー強度を超える領域においては、レーザーエネルギー強度と結晶化度との間には、逆相関性がある。換言すれば、前記領域において、レーザーエネルギー強度が大きくなれば、結晶膜の結晶化度は低くなる。

[0011]

したがって従来技術では、レーザーエネルギー強度が小さくなる方向に変動し、結晶膜の 凹凸状態が変動することに起因して「すじ」が発生したのか、レーザーエネルギー強度が 大きくなる方向に変動し、微結晶が発生することによって結晶膜の凹凸状態が変動するこ とに起因して「すじ」が発生したのかを判定することができない。

[0012]

したがって本発明の目的は、結晶膜に発生し得る微結晶を正確に判定することが可能となる結晶膜の検査方法および検査装置を提供することである。

[0013]

【課題を解決するための手段】

本発明は、結晶膜を厚み方向一方側から撮像した画像であって、複数列の帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向を特定する第1工程と、

第 1 方向の濃度値の分布を表す第 1 濃度分布を求めるとともに、第 1 方向と交差する第 2 方向の濃度値の分布を表す第 2 濃度分布を求める第 2 工程と、

第2濃度分布の分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜における微結晶の有無を判定する第3工程と

前記第3工程の判定結果に基づいて、結晶膜の結晶化不良を判定する第4工程とを有することを特徴とする結晶膜の検査方法である。

[0014]

本発明に従えば、第1工程においては、結晶膜を厚み方向一方側から撮像した画像であって、複数列の帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向を特定する。第2工程においては、第1方向の濃度値の分布を表す第1濃度分布を求めるとともに、第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布を求める。第3工程においては、第2濃度分布の分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜における微結晶の有無を判定する。第4工程においては、前記第3工程の判定結果に基づいて、結晶膜の結晶化不良を判定する。

[0015]

特に、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布に関し、その分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜における微結晶の有無を判定して濃度値の分布特性を求めておき、この濃度値の分布特性と結晶膜の微結晶発生状態との間の相関性を利用して、前記分布特性に基づいて結晶膜の微結晶発生状態との間の相関性を利用して、前記分布特性に変換などを用いることなく、結晶膜のたとたば導電性などの特性低下を確実に判定することができる。つまり本発明においては、前記公報に記載の従来技術のようにフーリエ変換を用いて、結晶膜の凹凸状態に関して周期性のあるものだけを検査するのではなく、結晶膜の凹凸状態の周期性に依存することなく凹凸状態の変化の中から前記特性低下の主原因となる

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微結晶を特定することで、結晶膜の特性低下を確実に判定することができる。それ故、本検査方法の汎用性を高くすることができる。

[0016]

また本発明は、第1工程は、

前記第1方向が含まれると予想される所定範囲内の複数方向に関して、前記複数方向のうちの一方向に沿った濃度値の分散を、前記一方向と交差する方向の複数の位置において求める第1段階と、

前記複数の位置において求めた一方向に沿す複数の濃度値の分散の平均を求める第2段階と、

前記所定範囲内の複数方向について、第1および第2段階を繰り返し実行する第3段階と

第 3 段階で各方向毎に求められる分散の平均に基づいて、複数方向のうちの1つの方向を 第 1 方向として特定する第 4 段階とを備えることを特徴とする。

[0017]

本発明に従えば、第1段階では、第1方向が含まれると予想される所定範囲内の複数方向に関して、前記複数方向のすちの一方向に沿った濃度値の分散を、前記一方向と交差する方向の複数の位置において求める。第2段階では、前記複数の位置において求めた一方向に沿す複数の濃度値の分散の平均を求める。第3段階では、前記所定範囲内の複数方向について、第1および第2段階を繰り返し実行する。第4段階では、第3段階で各方向毎に求められる分散の平均に基づいて、複数方向のすちの1つの方向を第1方向として特定することができる。

[0018]

特に、第3段階で各方向毎に求められる分散の平均に基づいて、複数方向のうちの1つの方向を第1方向として特定することができるので、たとえば結晶膜を移送する手段の機械的誤差および調整誤差などがあったとしても、帯状部分を撮像するためのたとえば撮像手段などを高精度に調整することなく、第1方向の濃度値の分布を表す第1濃度分布を正確にかつ簡単に求めることができる。したがって第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布も正確にかつ簡単に求めることができる。それ故、本検査方法の性能を高くすることが可能となる。

[0019]

また本発明は、第2工程は、

第 2 濃度分布に対し、前記第 1 濃度分布の平均値となる分布位置の濃度値の分布を表す平均値濃度分布を求める段階と、

平均値濃度分布に、予め定める濃度値以下の濃度値を排除する処理を行う段階と、

前記第2濃度分布に対し、前記第1濃度分布の累積相対度数分布の分布値が予め定めた値となる濃度値の第2方向の分布を表す相対度数値濃度分布を求める段階とを備え、

第3工程において、前記排除する処理を行う段階で求められる分布特性、および相対度数値濃度分布を求める段階で求められる分布特性から、微結晶化部分を特定することを特徴とする。

[0020]

本発明に従えば、第2工程においては、第2濃度分布に対し、第1濃度分布の平均値となる分布位置の濃度値の分布を表す平均値濃度分布を求め、次の段階で、平均値濃度分布に対し、予め定める濃度値以下の濃度値を排除する処理を行う。次の段階で、第2濃度分布に対し、前記第1濃度分布の累積相対度数分布の分布値が予め定めた値となる濃度値の第2方向の分布を表す相対度数値濃度分布を求める。第3工程においては、前記排除する処理を行う段階で求められる分布特性、および相対度数値濃度分布を求める段階で求められる分布特性から、微結晶化部分を特定する。

[0021]

特に第2工程においては、平均値濃度分布に、予め定める濃度値以下の濃度値を排除する処理を行っている。換言すれば、前記予め定める濃度値より大きい濃度値を抽出すること

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ができる。第3工程においては、上述した2つの分布特性から、微結晶化部分を特定することができる。このように特性低下の主原因となる微結晶化部分の特定を実現することができる。

[0022]

また本発明は、結晶膜に光を照射する照射手段と、

結晶膜を撮像する撮像手段と、

照射手段および撮像手段を用いて、結晶膜を厚み方向一方側から撮像した画像であって、 複数列の帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向を特定し、第1方向の濃度値の分布を表す第1濃度分布を求めるとともに、第1方向と交差する第 2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布を求める濃度分布算出手段と、

第2濃度分布の分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜における微結晶の有無を判定し、この判定結果に基づいて、結晶膜の結晶化不良を判定する判定手段とを有することを特徴とする結晶膜の検査装置である。

[0023]

本発明に従えば、照射手段によって結晶膜に光を照射しつつ、撮像手段によって結晶膜を撮像する。濃度分布算出手段は、これら照射手段および撮像手段を用いて、結晶膜を厚み方向一方側から撮像した画像であって、複数列の帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向を特定する。その後、前記濃度分布算出手段は、特定された第1方向の濃度値の分布を表す第1濃度分布を求めるとともに、第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布を求める。判定手段は、前記第2濃度分布の分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜にあける微結晶の有無を判定し、この判定結果に基づいて、結晶膜の結晶化不良を判定することができる。またこのような検査装置を実現することができる。

[0024]

特に、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2カーである。での分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜における微結晶の有無を判定して濃度値の分布特性を求めておき、このように帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて濃度値の分布特性を求めておき、この治・大性に変換を変化できる。それな、たとえばフーリエを換でいて結晶膜の微結晶発生状態を判定する。それな、たとえばフーリエを換できる。つまり本発明においては、前記公報に記載の従来技術のようにフーリエを換できる。つまり本発明においては、前記公報に記載の従来技術のようにフーリエを換できる。 お品膜の凹凸状態に関して周期性のあるものだけを検査するのではなく、結晶膜のちに対象の変化の中から前記特性低下の主原因となる検査を特定することで、結晶膜の特性低下を確実に判定することができる。それな、本検査装置の汎用性を高くすることができる。

[0025]

【発明の実施の形態】

図1は、本発明の実施の形態に係り、結晶膜の微結晶を検出する工程を段階的に示すフローチャートである。図2は、基板1を厚み方向に切断して拡大して示す断面図であって、基板1の一表面部に、結晶性膜を形成した後、結晶膜2(図3参照)を形成する工程を段階的に示す断面図である。図3は、エキシマレーザーアニール装置3と、帯状部分4との関係を示す基板1の斜視図である。本実施形態は、たとえば液晶ディスプレイを製造する際に用いられる結晶性シリコン半導体膜(以後、単に結晶膜と記載する場合もある)を検査する検査装置に、本発明の検査装置を適用した場合の一例を示す。以下の説明は、結晶膜の検査方法の説明も含む。

[0026]

図2(の)に示される基板1は、電気絶縁性材料であるたとえばガラスなどから成る厚み方向から見てたとえば長方形の平板状基材5の表面部5のに、非晶質膜としての非晶質シリコン層6が形成されて構成される。次に図2(b)に示すように、非晶質シリコン層6の一表面部6のに、たとえば酸化液が塗布され、この酸化液の働きによって酸化膜7が形

成される。酸化膜7の一表面部7のに触媒堆積層8が形成された図2(c)に示される基板1は、非晶質シリコン層6の結晶化が始まる温度、たとえば約550℃以上で加熱されて非晶質シリコン層6の結晶化が進行する。非晶質シリコン層6の結晶化がある程度進行した後、図3に示すように、エキシマレーザーアニール装置を用いて、非晶質シリコン層6に対しレーザー光Rのを照射する。その結果、非晶質シリコン層6は一度溶融し、冷却固化過程を経て多結晶化する。つまり基板1の一表面部に結晶膜2が形成される。

[0027]

図4は、結晶膜2の検査装置9を概略示す斜視図である。前記結晶膜2を検査する検査装置9は、メンステージ10と、メンステージ駆動機構11と、撮像手段としてのCCDカメラ12(CCD: Char9e Coupled Device)と、照射手段としての照明18と、濃度分布算出手段および判定手段としての制御装置14とを有する。メンステージ10は、基板1の厚み方向に移動可能に構成されている。またメンステージ10は、基板1の厚み方向に移動可能に構成されるとともに、メ方向およびン方向に移動可能に構成されている。前記メ方向は、長方形状のメンステージ10の長手方向に沿った方向であり、前記ン方向は、とつの方とが表が見いまがある。メンステージを動機構11は、CCDがよび基板1の厚み方向に直交する方向である。メンステージ駆動機構11は、CCDがありまする機構である。このメンステージ駆動機構11は、メンステージ10をメ方向に移動駆動可能なメ方向駆動部110とを有する。

[0028]

CCDカメラ12は、基板1の厚み方向一方(矢符A1にて示す)に支持され、基板1に形成された結晶膜2を撮像可能に配置して設けられている。このCCDカメラ12は、たとえば約1mm×1mmの矩形領域を撮像可能に構成されている。照明13は、たとえば、CCDカメラ12のレンズとなる暗視野顕微鏡12のの暗視野照明として使用される。これら照明13あよびCCDカメラ12を用いて、結晶膜2を厚み方向一方側から撮像することが可能となる。

[0029]

図5は、本発明の実施の形態に係る結晶膜の検査装置9の制御系のプロック図である。制御装置14は、中央演算処理装置15(CPU:Central Processing Unit、以後CPU15を表記)と読み出し専用記憶装置16(ROM:ReadOnly Memory、以後ROM16と表記)と読み出し書き込み記憶装置17(RAM:Random Access Memory、以後RAM17と表記)とから成るマイクロコンピュータと、バス18と、入出力インターフェース19と、図示外の駆動回路とで構成されている。

[0030]

CPU15とROM16とRAM17とは、バス18を介して入出力インターフェース19に電気的に接続されている。入出力インターフェース19には、CCDカメラ12、入力手段であるキーボード20およびマウス21がそれぞれ電気的に接続されている。また入出力インターフェース19には、図示外の駆動回路を介して××ステージ駆動機構11、照明13がよび表示装置22がそれぞれ電気的に接続されている。ROM16には、後述する第1がよび第2濃度分布の分布特性としての濃度分布特性を求め、結晶膜2の微結晶を判定するとともに結晶膜2の結晶化不良を判定するプログラムが格納されている。本プログラムはCPU15にて実行される。

[0031]

図6は、レーザーエネルギーと結晶化度および表面粗さとの関係を表す図表である。非晶質シリコン層6に対し、照射するレーザー光Rののレーザーエネルギーが所望の値よりも低い場合には、結晶膜2の結晶化度は、所望の100%よりも低く、結晶膜2の表面粗さも低い傾向にある。レーザーアニールのレーザーエネルギーが適切な場合には、レーザーエネルギーによって溶融した内部に非溶融部が点在する。そして前記非溶融部を結晶核として結晶が成長するので、結晶粒径が数ミクロンメーターの大きな結晶となる。

[0032]

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照射するレーザー光Rののレーザーエネルギーが所望の値よりも高い場合には、結晶膜2に微結晶が発生し、その微結晶化部分28(図9の参照)の表面粗さは極めて低くなる。微結晶化部分28は、微結晶部分とも呼ばれている。前記微結晶は、レーザーアニールのレーザーエネルギーが過大となった場合に、結晶膜2が前記レーザーエネルギーによって完全に溶融し、冷却時に結晶核が高密度かつランダムに形成され、各々の結晶核から結晶が成長するため、結晶粒径が数百ナノメーターの極めて小さい結晶の集合となったものである。

[0033]

[0034]

このように基板1を予め定めた送り速度でX方向に送りつつ、エキシマレーザーアニール装置3は、前記矩形状のレーザー光Rのを予め定めるパルス数で発振することによって、基板1には、略Y方向に延びる帯状部分4が形成される。本実施形態において、「略Y方向」は「Y方向」を含む。ただし、所望の結晶化度が得られるレーザーエネルギー値よりもかなり小さいレーザーエネルギー値で照射された場合には、帯状部分4は皆無となる。また所望の結晶化度が得られるレーザーエネルギー値が得られるレーザーエネルギー値よりもかなり大きなレーザーエネルギー値で照射された場合にも、帯状部分4は皆無となる。各帯状部分4の帯幅は、たとえば前記パルス数の整数倍に略相当する。

[0035]

図7は、帯状部分の延在方向すなわち帯状方向を求める方法を段階的に示すフローチャーする。図1におけるの検出方法を示すフローチャーを求める。図1におけるの検出方法を示すフローチャーを求める。図1におけるの検出方法を示すとの図8におけるもにである。図1におけるのにでは、2、3、でなっての名におけるもにである。図9におけるもにでからない。図9におけるもにでは、2、3が帯状部分4のの全での分散算出を示すのであり、質別であり、質別であり、では、一方のとは、一方のとは、一方のとは、一方のとは、一方のとの方のであり、一方のとでが表示する。図9に対して分散算出を行う場合に、分散算出方の23が帯状方ののでであり、図9によりの所定範囲内の複数方のに対して分散算出を行う場合に、分散算出方の23が帯状方ののでである。図9によりの所定範囲内の複数方のに関して、前記でありに沿ったがででありに表する方向の複数の位置においてでありに表する方向ので表がありて、複数方ののである。図1によりに表する方法を説明するための図である。

[0036]

図1のステップ1および2、図7のステップ10および11に示すように、基板1すなわち結晶膜2の一部分を、メンステージ駆動機構11によって検査対象位置に移動させ、前記結晶膜2に、照明18によって光を照射する。図4および図9に示すように、結晶膜2がCCDカメラ12によって結晶膜2の厚み方向一方側から撮像される画像8は、表示装置22に表示される。また結晶膜2は、帯状部分4が略ン方向に近い方向に沿って直線状に撮像される。このようにステップ11において、複数列の帯状部分4を有する画像8が得られる。前記画像8は、たとえばRAM17に一時的に記憶される。

[0037]

ステップ11で得られた帯状部分4を有する画像8に基づいて、ステップ12では、所定の範囲の各方向について、分散算出方向23に濃度値の分散を求める。すなわちステップ

12においては、略メ方向に近い方向であって、予め定めた方向の範囲に含まれる全ての分散算出方向23に対して、後述する撮像範囲のメ座標がYSにおけるXSからXeに至る全ての×から分散算出方向23へメ座標がYeとなるまでの範囲の分散を求める。換言すれば、帯状部分4が含まれると予想される所定範囲内の全ての分散算出方向23に関して、前記全ての分散算出方向23のうちの一方向に沿った濃度値の分散を求める。ステップ13では、求めた分散の×に対する平均を求める。すなわち、前記一方向と交差する方向の複数の位置において求めた一方向に沿う複数の濃度値の分散の平均を求める。

[0038]

せして所定範囲内の全ての分散算出方向23について、上述した一方向に沿った濃度値の分散を求め、複数の濃度値の分散の平均を求める段階を繰り返し実行する。前記分散の平均を分散平均と表記する場合もある。次にステップ14では、前記段階で分散算出方向23年に求められる分散の平均に基づいて、全ての分散算出方向23のうちの1つの方向を第1方向23に対する分散平均のうち最も小さい分散平均つまり最小の平均値を有する分散算出方向23を、第1方向である帯状方向と決定する。

[0039]

前記撮像範囲は、矩形状の画像領域のすち座標(XS、YS)から座標(Xe、Ye)にわたる全ての領域と同義である。前記座標(XS、YS)は、矩形状の画像領域の×方向に平行な一方側の一辺と、この一辺に隣接しかつメ方向に平行な一方側の一辺との交点P1を示す。前記座標(Xe、Ye)は、前記交点P1の対角となる交点P2であって、×方向に平行な他方側の一辺と、この一辺に隣接しかつメ方向に平行な他方側の一辺との交点P2を示す。

[0040]

図12は、帯状部分4を有する画像から、帯状方向の平均濃度値および相対度数分布を求める方法を説明するための図である。図13は、累積相対度数分布の分布値から相対度数分布濃度値を選び出す方法を説明するための図である。図14は、図15の平均濃度値分布と図16の変動率分布とに対応する画像を示す図である。図15は、図14の帯状部分4を有する画像に対応する1次元の変動率分布を示す図である。図16は、図14の帯状部分4を有する画像に対応する1次元の変動率分布を示す図である。図17は、図18の相対度数分布濃度値に対応する画像を示す図である。図17の帯状部分4を有する画像に対応する画像を示す図である。図17の帯状部分4を有する画像に対応する目次元の相対度数分布濃度値を示す図である。図19は、変動率分布と相対度数分布濃度値とから、微結晶化部分を判定する方法を説明するための図である。図8も併せて説明する。

[0041]

ステップ15では、帯状部分4に沿った濃度値の平均値であって、複数列の帯状部分4のすち少なくとも列毎に求められる複数の濃度値の平均値である第1濃度分布を求める。すなわち、ステップ14で得られた帯状方向に対し、前記撮像範囲のソ座標がYSにおけるXSからXeに至る全ての×から帯状方向ヘソ座標がYeとなるまでの範囲の平均濃度値25か、第1濃度分布に相当する。

[0042]

次にステップ16に移行し、ステップ15で得られたXSからXCに至る全てのメ毎の平均濃度値25を、XSからXCに至るまでの1次元の平均濃度値分布として配列する(図15参照)。前記1次元の平均濃度値分布が、第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布に相当する。次にステップ17では、ステップ16で得られた1次元の平均濃度値分布に対して、式(1)で表されるハイパスフィルタ処理であって、後述する変動率分布を求めるためのハイパスフィルタ処理を実行する。ハイパスフィルタ処理は、ハイパス処理と同義である。

[0043]

【数1】

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H (x) =
$$\sum_{t=x-L}^{x+L} \{ M (t) - M (x) \}$$
 ... (1)

[0044]

式(1)に関して、各×に対する平均濃度値をM(×)と表し、ハイパスフィルタ処理後の各×に対する変動率27をH(×)と表す。フィルタサイズしは、微結晶を精度良く検出する目的で変動率27を検出できるように予め定められる。具体的にフィルタサイズしは、エキシマレーザーアニール装置3の基板送り速度、発振パルス数、レーザー光Rへの矩形状の幅、図示外の撮像系の倍率および画像分解能などから定められる。

[0045]

上述したように前記ステップ17において、前記八イパスフィルタ処理を実行することによって、×方向に急峻な平均濃度値の変化を抽出した変動率の1次元の平均濃度値分布に対して、予め定める濃度値以下の濃度値を排除する処理を行う。その後図8、図17、、図17、予め定める濃度値以下の濃度値を排除する処理を行う。その後図8、図17、、図18に示すように、ステップ18において、所定の累積相対度数分布となる濃度値でを得られた、ステップ18では、ステップ15で得られたのまり第2方向に1次元化する。すなわちステップ18では、ステップ15で得らりたるといるが、ととに至る全てのメ毎の相対度数分布の下側累積相対度数が、たとなる濃度値(予め定める値となる濃度値分布として配列する。このステップ18がら発となる濃度である。これによって、相対度数分布濃度値においては、帯状部分の中の一部に微結晶が存在する場合でも、微結晶の濃度値を表すことが可能となる。

[0046]

次に図1のステップ3、図8、図19に示すように、ステップ19において、所定の度数分布濃度値と変動率とから、微結晶を判定し計数する。すなわちステップ19では、ステップ17で得られた1次元を動率分布および、ステップ18で得られた1次元相対度数濃度値分布に対して、XSからXeに至る全ての※毎に、変動率27と相対度数分布濃度値26とから、その※の位置が微結晶化部分であるか否か判定する。たとえば前記変動率27が所定の変動率しきい値より低くかつ、相対度数濃度しきい値より低い場合に、その※の位置は微結晶であると判定される。さらに微結晶と判定された※の位置の割合および連続していない微結晶と判定された※の位置の個数を計数する。

[0047]

複数のサンプル基板から撮像された微結晶の帯状部分4の変動率を調べ、微結晶の検出精度が極力良くなるように、前記変動率しきい値を決定する。また複数のサンプル基板から撮像された微結晶の帯状部分4の濃度分布を調べ、微結晶の検出精度が極力良くなるように、前記相対度数濃度しきい値を決定する。

[0048]

せの後、図1のステップ4において、ステップ19で得られた微結晶と判定された×の位置の割合および連続していない微結晶と判定された×の位置の個数に対し、予め定める不良判定しまい値より大きい前記割合および個数であった場合に、この結晶膜は不良であると判定する。その後ステップ5でこの図1のフローを終了する。したがって本検査装置9によれば、不所望の結晶化度の結晶膜2すなわち不良基板1を排除することが可能となる。前記不良判定しまい値は、検出精度などに応じて決定する。

[0049]

以上説明した結晶膜2の検査方法によれば、先ず、結晶膜2を厚み方向一方側から撮像した、複数列の帯状部分4を有する画像Sに基づいて、帯状部分4の延在方向である第1方向を特定する。その後の工程において、前記第1方向の濃度値の分布を表す第1濃度分布を求め、第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布を求める。その後の工程において、第2濃度分布の分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜2に発生し得る微結晶の

有無を判定することができる。前記工程の判定結果に基づいて、結晶膜2の結晶化不良を 判定することができる。

[0050]

特に、帯状部分4の延在方向である第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布に関して、その分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜2に発生し得る微結晶の有無を切ける。このように帯状部分4を有する画像8に基づいて濃度値の分布特性とおいる。3回像8に基づいて濃度値の分布特性とおいれて濃度値の分布特性とおいて濃度値の分布特性に基づいて結晶膜2の微結晶発生状態8の間の相関性を利用して、たるではかってはなどを用いることなく、結晶膜2のたとない前記公報に記載のがは来技では、前記のではなく、結晶膜2の凹凸状態の周期性に依存することなく凹凸状態の変化の中からるのではなく、結晶膜2の問出性に依存することなく凹凸状態の変化の中がに記特性低下の主原因となる微結晶を特定することができる。それ故、本検査方法の汎用性を高くすることができる。

[0051]

また本検査方法によれば、画像8のうち予め定める所定範囲の方向に延びる帯状部分4に基づいて、所定範囲内の全ての方向に対して濃度値の分散値をされずれずめる。その後、第2方向に関して分散値の平均値を求め、求められた分散値の平均値のすち、最小の平方値を有する方向を第1方向として特定することができる。このように帯状部分4の延右1である第1方向を正確に特定することができるので、たとえば結晶膜2すなわち基板1を移送するメンステージ駆動機構11の機械的誤差および調整誤差などがあったとして1を移送する大ク4を撮像するための前記CCDカメラ12を高精度に調整することができる。したがって第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布も正確にかつ簡単に求めることができる。それ故、本検査方法の性能を高くすることが可能となる。

[0052]

また本検査方法によれば、図19に示すように、ハイパスフィルタ処理を実行する段階で求められる分布特性、および第2方向の分布を求める段階で求められる分布特性から、それでれ予め定められる変動率しきい値、および相対度数濃度しきい値に基づいて微結晶化部分28を特定することができる。特に、図19に示すように、分布特性から、結晶膜2に与えられるエネルギー強度が増加し微結晶が発生して凹凸状態が変動した場合の濃度変動率を抽出することができる。しかも、結晶膜2に与えられるエネルギー強度が減少して凹凸状態が変動した場合の濃度変動率を抽出しないように予め定める変動率の値および、微結晶が発生している部位に生じる濃度の値に基づいて、微結晶化部分28を特定することができる。

[0053]

また本検査装置9によれば、照明13によって結晶膜2に光を照射しつつ、CCDカメラ12によって結晶膜2を撮像する。これら照明13およびCCDカメラ12を用いて、結晶膜2を厚み方向一方側から撮像した画像8に基づいて、前記帯状部分4の延在方向である第1方向が特定される。その後、特定された第1方向の濃度値の分布を表す第1濃度分布が求められ、第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布が求められる。前記第2濃度分布の分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜2に発生し得3微結晶の有無が判定される。この判定結果に基づいて、結晶膜2の結晶化不良を判定することができる。

[0054]

このように、結晶膜2に発生し得る微結晶を正確に判定することが可能となる結晶膜2の検査装置9を実現することができる。前記検査装置9によれば、結晶膜2の凹凸状態の周期性などに依存することなく凹凸状態の変化の中から、結晶膜2の特性低下の主原因となる微結晶を特定することで、結晶膜2の特性低下を確実に判定することができる。それ故、本検査装置9の汎用性を高くすることができる。

[0055]

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前記検査装置9あよび検査方法によって得られる判定結果つまり結晶化度に基づいて、レーザーアニール処理にあけるエネルギーの過不足を判定し、この判定結果に基づいてレーザーアニール処理で前駆体に与えるエネルギーを制御することができるので、その制御以後、所望の結晶膜2の結晶化度を実現することが可能となる。

[0056]

本実施形態においては、ステップ17の後、上述した所定の累積相対度数分布となる濃度値を、×方向に1次元化するステップを配設したが、前記ステップをステップ15の後でかつステップ16の前に配設してもよい。この場合にはステップ17の後、後述するステップ19に移行する。またこの場合にも、前記実施形態と同様の効果を奏する。その他、前記実施形態に、特許請求の範囲を逸脱しなり範囲において種々の部分的変更を行う場合もある。

[0057]

【発明の効果】

以上のように本発明によれば、特に、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布に関し、その分布特性に基づいて濃度値の分布特性を求めておき、このように帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて濃度値の分布特性を求めておき、この濃度値の分布特性と結晶膜の微結晶発生状態との間の相関性を利用して、前記分布特性に基づいて結晶膜の微結晶発生状態を判定することができる。や性ななないができる。かまり本発明においては、前記公報に記載の従来技術のようにフーリエ変換を用いて、結晶膜の凹凸状態に関して周期性のあるものだけを検査するのではなく、結晶膜の凹凸状態の周期性に依存することなく凹凸状態の変化の中から前記特性低下の主原因となる微結晶を特定することで、結晶膜の特性低下を確実に判定することができる。それ故、本検査方法の汎用性を高くすることができる。

[0058]

また本発明によれば、特に、第3段階で各方向毎に求められる分散の平均に基づいて、複数方向のうちの1つの方向を第1方向として特定することができるので、たとえば結晶膜を移送する手段の機械的誤差および調整誤差などがあったとしても、帯状部分を撮像するためのたとえば撮像手段などを高精度に調整することなく、第1方向の濃度値の分布を表す第1濃度分布を正確にかつ簡単に求めることができる。したがって第1方向と交差する第2方向の濃度値の分布を表す第2濃度分布も正確にかつ簡単に求めることができる。それ故、本検査方法の性能を高くすることが可能となる。

[0059]

また本発明によれば、特に第2工程においては、平均値濃度分布に、予め定める濃度値以下の濃度値を排除する処理を行っている。換言すれば、前記予め定める濃度値より大きい濃度値を抽出することができる。第3工程においては、2つの分布特性から、微結晶化部分を特定することができる。このように特性低下の主原因となる微結晶化部分の特定を実現することができる。

[0060]

また本発明によれば、結晶膜における微結晶を正確に判定することができる結晶膜の検査を実現することができる。特に、帯状部分の延在方向である第1方向と交差する第2カーに関し、その分布特性に基づいて、結晶膜の有無を判定している。このように帯状部分を有する画像に基づいて濃度値の分布特性を求めておき、この濃度値の分布特性と結晶発生状態との間のは着品発生状態との間のを利用して、前記分布特性に基づいて結晶膜の微結晶発生状態を判定することができる。 つまり本発明においてとなば導電性などの特性低下を確実に判定することができる。 つまり四凸状態に関して周期性のあるものだけを検査するのではなく、結晶膜の凹凸状態の周期性に依存することなく凹凸状態の変化の中から前記特性低下の主原因となる微結晶を特定することで、結晶膜の特性低下を確実に判定

することができる。それ故、本検査装置の汎用性を高くすることができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

- 【図1】本発明の実施の形態に係り、結晶膜の微結晶を検出する工程を段階的に示すフローチャートである。
- 【図2】基板1を厚み方向に切断して拡大して示す断面図であって、基板1の一表面部に、結晶性膜を形成した後、結晶膜2を形成する工程を段階的に示す断面図である。
- 【図3】エキシマレーザーアニール装置3と、帯状部分4との関係を示す基板の斜視図である。
- 【図4】結晶膜2の検査装置9を概略示す斜視図である。
- 【図5】本発明の実施の形態に係る結晶膜2の検査装置9の制御系のプロック図である。
- 【 図 6 】 レ ー ザ ー 工 ネ ル ギ ー と 結 晶 化 度 お よ ひ 表 面 粗 さ と の 関 係 を 表 す 図 表 で あ る 。
- 【図7】帯状部分の延在方向すなわち帯状方向を求める方法を段階的に示すフローチャートである。
- 【図8】微結晶の検出方法を示すフローチャートである。
- 【図9】帯状部分4を有する画像8から、帯状部分4の延在方向すなわち帯状方向を求める方法を説明するための図であり、図9(cc)は、画像8から、帯状方向が含まれると予想される所定範囲内の全ての分散算出方向23に対して分散算出を行う場合に、分散算出方向23が帯状方向とは異なる状態を示す図であり、図9(b)は、画像8から、前記所定範囲内の全ての分散算出方向23に対して分散算出を行う場合に、分散算出方向23が帯状方向と一致する状態を示す図である。
- 【図10】所定範囲内の複数方向に関して、前記複数方向のすちの一方向に沿った濃度値の分散を、前記一方向と交差する方向の複数の位置において求めるための説明図である。
- 【図11】各方向毎に求められる分散の平均に基づいて、複数方向のうちの1つの方向を 第1方向として特定する方法を説明するための図である。
- 【図12】帯状部分4を有する画像から、帯状方向の平均濃度値および相対度数分布を求める方法を説明するための図である。
- 【図13】累積相対度数分布の分布値から相対度数分布濃度値を選び出す方法を説明するための図である。
- 【図14】図15の平均濃度値分布と図16の変動率分布とに対応する画像を示す図である。
- 【図15】図14の帯状部分4を有する画像に対応する1次元の平均濃度値分布を示す図である。
- 【図16】図14の帯状部分4を有する画像に対応する1次元の変動率分布を示す図である。
- 【図17】図18の相対度数分布濃度値に対応する画像を示す図である。
- 【図18】図17の帯状部分4を有する画像に対応する1次元の相対度数分布濃度値を示す図である。
- 【図19】変動率分布と相対度数分布濃度値とから、微結晶化部分を判定する方法を説明するための図である。

【符号の説明】

- 2 結晶膜
- 4 帯状部分
- 9 検査装置
- 12 CCDカメラ
- 1 3 照明
- 1 4 制御装置
- 15 CPU
- 16 ROM
- 17 RAM
- 28 微結晶化部分

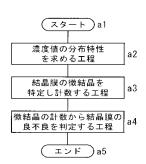
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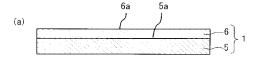
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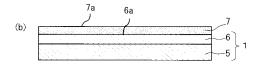
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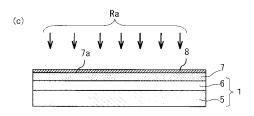
【図1】



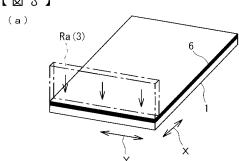
【図2】

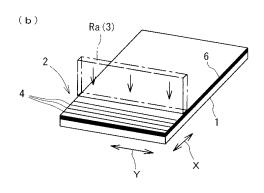




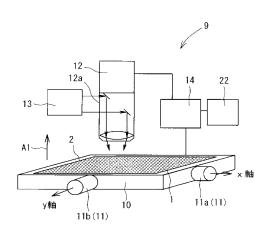


[🗵 3]

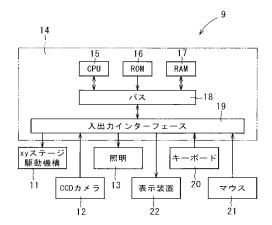




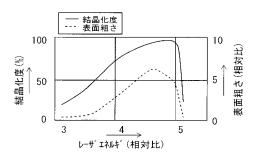
【図4】



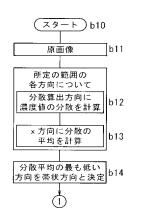
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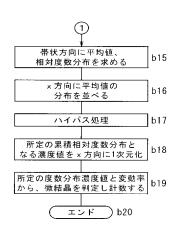
【図 6】



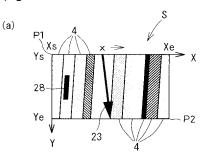
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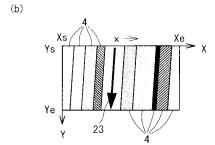


【図8】

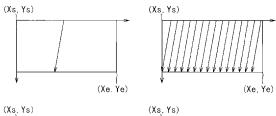


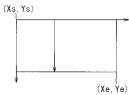
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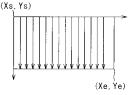


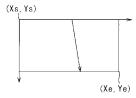


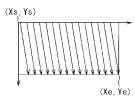
【図10】





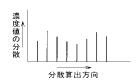




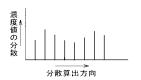


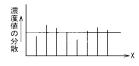
【図11】



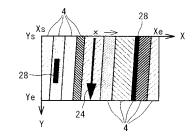




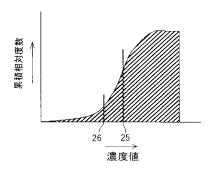




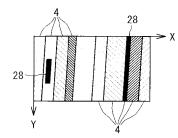
【図12】



【図13】



【図14】



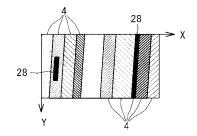
【図 1 5 】



【図 1 6 】



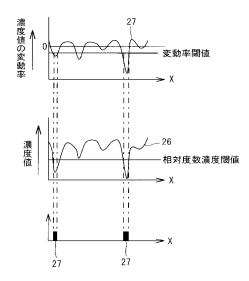
【図17】



【図18】



【図19】



フロントページの続き

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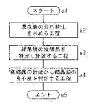
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(54) INSPECTION METHOD AND INSPECTION APPARATUS OF CRYSTAL FILM



(57) Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide a method and an apparatus for inspecting a crystal film capable of accurately determining whether possible microcrystals are present or not in the crystal film.

SOLUTION: A second concentration distribution represents the distribution of impurity concentration in a second direction crossing a first direction in which a belt-like region extends. It is determined on the basis of the properties of the second concentration distribution whether the possible microcrystals are produced in the crystal film or not. As mentioned above, the properties of the concentration distribution are previously obtained on the basis of an image equipped with the belt-like region, the occurrence condition of the microcrystals in the crystal film can be determined on the basis of the properties of the concentration distribution, utilizing a correlation between the properties of the concentration distribution and the occurrence

condition of microcrystals in the crystal film. Therefore, for instance, it can be surely determined without using a Fourier transform whether or not the crystal film is reduced in properties, such as conductivity or the like.

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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1]

The 1st process which specifies the 1st direction which is the image which picturized the crystal film from the thickness direction one side, and is the extension direction of a band-like part based on the image which has the band-like part of two or more trains,

The 2nd process which searches for the 2nd concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction while searching for the 1st concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction,

The 3rd process which judges the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal film based on the distribution property of the 2nd concentration distribution,

The inspection approach of the crystal film characterized by having the 4th process which judges poor crystallization of the crystal film based on the judgment result of said 3rd process.

[Claim 2]

The 1st process,

The 1st step which asks for distribution of the concentration value along the one direction of said directions of plurality in two or more locations of the direction which intersects said one direction about the direction of plurality of predetermined within the limits expected that said 1st direction is included,

The 2nd step which asks for the average of distribution of two or more concentration values along the one direction for which it asked in said two or more locations,

The 3rd step which repeats and performs the 1st and the 2nd step about the direction of plurality of said predetermined within the limits, The inspection approach of the crystal film according to claim 1 characterized by having the 4th step which specifies the one direction of [of the directions of plurality] as the 1st direction in the 3rd step based on the average of the distribution called for for every direction.

[Claim 3]

The 2nd process,

The phase of searching for the average concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the concentration value of the distribution location used as the average of said 1st concentration distribution to the 2nd concentration distribution,

The phase of performing processing which eliminates the concentration value below the concentration value beforehand set to average concentration distribution,

It has the phase of searching for the relative-frequency value concentration distribution showing distribution of the 2nd direction of a concentration value where the distribution value of the accumulation relative frequency distribution of said 1st concentration distribution turns into a value defined beforehand, to said 2nd concentration distribution,

The inspection approach of the crystal film according to claim 1 characterized by specifying a microcrystal-ized part from the distribution property searched for in the 3rd process in the phase of performing said processing to eliminate, and the distribution property searched for in the phase of searching for relative-frequency value concentration distribution.

[Claim 4]

An exposure means to irradiate light at the crystal film, An image pick-up means to picturize the crystal film, A concentration distribution calculation means search for the 2nd concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd direction cross while searching for the 1st concentration distribution which is the image which picturized the crystal film from the thickness direction one side, specifies the 1st direction which is the extension direction of a band-like part using an exposure means and an image pick-up means based on the image which has the band-like part of two or more trains, and expresses distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction, Test equipment of the crystal film characterized by having a judgment means to judge the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal film and to judge poor crystallization of the crystal film based on this judgment result, based on the distribution property of the 2nd concentration distribution.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention] [0001]

[Field of the Invention]

In case this invention manufactures a liquid crystal display panel, concerning the inspection approach of the crystal film, and test equipment, it relates to the inspection approach and test equipment which inspect the polish recon film generated by performing excimer laser annealing treatment.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art]

In manufacturing the thin film transistor (TFT:Thin Film Transistor) used as an active component of a liquid crystal display etc., it is common to use a thin film-like silicon semi-conductor. A thin film-like silicon semi-conductor is divided roughly into two, the amorphous silicon semi-conductor which consists of amorphous silicon), and the crystalline silicon semi-conductor which consists of the silicon which has crystallinity.

[0003]

Since it has the description that membrane formation temperature is comparatively low, manufacturing comparatively easily by vapor growth is possible, and it is rich in mass production nature, most generally the amorphous silicon semi-conductor is used. However, since physical properties, such as conductivity, are inferior in an amorphous silicon semi-conductor compared with a crystalline silicon semi-conductor, in order to acquire a high-speed property, establishment of the manufacturing technology of TFT which consists of a crystalline silicon semi-conductor is called for strongly. namely, the 1 surface section of a substrate -- plasma CVD (CVD:Chemical Vapor Deposition) -- an amorphous silicon thin film should be formed of law or reduced pressure thermochemistry vapor growth, and pass a solid phase growth crystallization process and a laser annealing crystallization process

[0004]

Conventionally, the technique of inspecting the crystal film crystallized by the excimer laser annealer is indicated (for example, patent reference 1). On the conventional technique given in said patent reference 1, the light which has predetermined directivity in the 1 surface section of a substrate is irradiated, the scattered reflection luminous intensity from the 1 surface section is measured, and the technique of judging the concavo-convex condition of the 1 surface

one by one by it -- the crystalline silicon semi-conductor film (it is

henceforth written as the crystal film) is formed.

section based on the measurement value is indicated. Said scattered reflection luminous intensity is measured by the Fourier analysis which paid its attention to generating of "****" which has the directivity and periodicity of the specification resulting from the laser scan in an excimer laser annealer. If judged with it being ruined from the concavoconvex condition of said 1 surface section, it will be judged with said crystal film being faulty.

[0005]

By the way, according to the experiment which the invention—in—this—application person conducted repeatedly, the particle size of the crystal which constitutes the crystal film processed by said excimer laser annealer becomes large, and the concavo—convex condition of the crystal film becomes large as the laser energy reinforcement of an excimer laser annealer becomes large. However, if laser energy reinforcement exceeds predetermined reinforcement, the crystal which constitutes the crystal film will turn into a microcrystal with a small particle size, and the concavo—convex condition of the crystal film will become small. Compared with the big crystal of particle size, properties, such as conductivity, are extremely inferior in said microcrystal, and it reduces the property of the crystal film remarkably.

When the energy intensity given to the crystal film becomes excessive, the crystal film fuses thoroughly with said energy, and a crystalline nucleus is formed in high density and random at the time of cooling. In order that a crystal may grow from each crystalline nucleus, said microcrystal used as the set of the very small crystal whose diameter of crystal grain is hundreds of nm is formed. Therefore, in order for properties, such as conductivity, to obtain the good crystal film, the laser energy reinforcement of an excimer laser annealer does not exceed the predetermined reinforcement which a microcrystal generates, and it is desirable that it is the reinforcement near said predetermined reinforcement.

[0007]

[Patent reference 1]

JP, 2001–110861, A

[8000]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention]

As mentioned above, it is desirable to control laser energy reinforcement, but there is a limitation in the control precision of laser energy reinforcement, and whenever it is laser radiation, there is fluctuation of the laser energy reinforcement which is extent 5% or less

about 3% or more. When laser energy exceeds predetermined reinforcement and a microcrystal is furthermore generated at the time of fluctuation of said laser energy reinforcement, said property of the crystal film obtained becomes remarkably low.

[0009]

With the conventional technique given in said patent reference 1, since fluctuation of the concavo-convex condition of the 1 surface section by fluctuation of laser energy reinforcement generates "****" which has the specific directivity resulting from a laser scan, it has judged the degree of crystallinity of the crystal film based on generating of the above "****." Namely, it is premised on fixed periodicity being in the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film at least with the judgment means of "****" used with said conventional technique. Based on said periodicity, the degree of crystallinity of the crystal film is judged using the Fourier transform. However, the crystal film which the laser energy reinforcement of an excimer laser annealer was not necessarily changed periodically, and was crystallized actually has some as which periodicity is not regarded in the concavo-convex condition. Therefore, the technique of judging degree of crystallinity using the Fourier transform based on the periodicity of the crystal film has low versatility.

[0010]

Furthermore, there is functionality between laser energy reinforcement and degree of crystallinity in a field smaller than the laser energy reinforcement from which desired degree of crystallinity is obtained. If it puts in another way, if laser energy reinforcement becomes large, in said small field, the degree of crystallinity of the crystal film will become high. However, in the field exceeding the laser energy reinforcement from which desired degree of crystallinity is obtained, inverse relationship nature is between laser energy reinforcement and degree of crystallinity. If it puts in another way, if laser energy reinforcement becomes large, in said field, the degree of crystallinity of the crystal film will become low.

[0011]

Therefore, it cannot judge whether it originated in changing in the direction in which laser energy reinforcement becomes large about whether did it originate in changing with the conventional technique in the direction in which laser energy reinforcement becomes small, and changing the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film and "****" occurred, and changing the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film, when a microcrystal is generated, and "****" occurred.

[0012]

Therefore, the object of this invention is offering the inspection approach of the crystal film and test equipment which become possible [judging to accuracy the microcrystal which may be generated on the crystal film].

[0013]

[Means for Solving the Problem]

This invention is the 1st process which specifies the 1st direction which is the image which picturized the crystal film from the thickness direction one side, and is the extension direction of a band-like part based on the image which has the band-like part of two or more trains, The 2nd process which searches for the 2nd concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction while searching for the 1st concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction,

The 3rd process which judges the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal film based on the distribution property of the 2nd concentration distribution,

It is the inspection approach of the crystal film characterized by having the 4th process which judges poor crystallization of the crystal film based on the judgment result of said 3rd process.

[0014]

If this invention is followed, in the 1st process, it is the image which picturized the crystal film from the thickness direction one side, and the 1st direction which is the extension direction of a band-like part is specified based on the image which has the band-like part of two or more trains. In the 2nd process, while searching for the 1st concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction, the 2nd concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction is searched for. In the 3rd process, the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal film is judged based on the distribution property of the 2nd concentration distribution. In the 4th process, poor crystallization of the crystal film is judged based on the judgment result of said 3rd process.

[0015]

Based on the distribution property, the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal film is judged about the 2nd concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction which is the extension direction of a band-like part, and the 2nd crossing direction especially. Thus, the distribution property of a concentration value is searched for based on the image which has a bandlike part, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film can be judged based on said distribution property using the functionality between the distribution property of this concentration value, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film. So, property lowering, such as crystal film, for example, conductivity etc., can be judged certainly, without using the Fourier transform etc., for example. That is, in this invention, property lowering of the crystal film can be certainly judged by specifying the microcrystal which becomes the cause of main of said property lowering out of change of a concavo-convex condition, without not inspecting only what has periodicity in said official report about the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film using the Fourier transform like the conventional technique of a publication, but being dependent on the periodicity of the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film. So, versatility of this inspection approach can be made high. [0016]

Moreover, this invention is the 1st process,

The 1st step which asks for distribution of the concentration value along the one direction of said directions of plurality in two or more locations of the direction which intersects said one direction about the direction of plurality of predetermined within the limits expected that said 1st direction is included,

The 2nd step which asks for the average of distribution of two or more concentration values along the one direction for which it asked in said two or more locations,

The 3rd step which repeats and performs the 1st and the 2nd step about the direction of plurality of said predetermined within the limits, It is characterized by having the 4th step which specifies the one direction of [of the directions of plurality] as the 1st direction in the 3rd step based on the average of the distribution called for for every direction.

[0017]

If this invention is followed, in the 1st step, it will ask for distribution of the concentration value along the one direction of said directions of plurality in two or more locations of the direction which intersects said one direction about the direction of plurality of predetermined within the limits expected that the 1st direction is included. It asks for the average of distribution of two or more concentration values along the one direction for which it asked in said

two or more locations in the 2nd step. In the 3rd step, the 1st and the 2nd step are repeated and performed about the direction of plurality of said predetermined within the limits. In the 4th step, the one direction of [of the directions of plurality] can be specified as the 1st direction based on the average of the distribution called for for every direction in the 3rd step.

[0018]

Since the one direction of [of the directions of plurality] can be especially specified as the 1st direction in the 3rd step based on the average of the distribution called for for every direction For example, the 1st concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction can be searched for correctly and easily, without adjusting an image pick-up means etc. to high degree of accuracy, in order to picturize a band-like part even if there are a mechanical error, an alignment error, etc. of a means which transport the crystal film. Therefore, the 2nd concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction can also be searched for correctly and easily. So, it becomes possible to make the engine performance of this inspection approach high.

[0019]

Moreover, this invention is the 2nd process,

The phase of searching for the average concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the concentration value of the distribution location used as the average of said 1st concentration distribution to the 2nd concentration distribution,

The phase of performing processing which eliminates the concentration value below the concentration value beforehand set to average concentration distribution,

It has the phase of searching for the relative-frequency value concentration distribution showing distribution of the 2nd direction of a concentration value where the distribution value of the accumulation relative frequency distribution of said 1st concentration distribution turns into a value defined beforehand, to said 2nd concentration distribution,

In the 3rd process, it is characterized by specifying a microcrystalized part from the distribution property searched for in the phase of performing said processing to eliminate, and the distribution property searched for in the phase of searching for relative-frequency value concentration distribution.

[0020]

If this invention is followed, in the 2nd process, the average concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the distribution location used as the average of the 1st concentration distribution is searched for from the 2nd concentration distribution, it will be the next phase and processing which eliminates the concentration value below the concentration value beforehand set to average concentration distribution will be performed. The relativefrequency value concentration distribution showing distribution of the 2nd direction of the concentration value from which the distribution value of the accumulation relative frequency distribution of said 1st concentration distribution turns into a value defined beforehand to the 2nd concentration distribution in the next phase is searched for. In the 3rd process, a microcrystal-ized part is specified from the distribution property searched for in the phase of performing said processing to eliminate, and the distribution property searched for in the phase of searching for relative-frequency value concentration distribution. [0021]

Especially in the 2nd process, processing which eliminates the concentration value below the concentration value beforehand set to average concentration distribution is performed. If it puts in another way, a larger concentration value than said concentration value defined beforehand can be extracted. In the 3rd process, a microcrystal-ized part can be specified from two distribution properties mentioned above. Thus, specification of the microcrystal-ized part constituting the main cause of property lowering is realizable.

[0022]

Moreover, this invention is an exposure means to irradiate light at the crystal film,

An image pick-up means to picturize the crystal film,
A concentration distribution calculation means search for the 2nd
concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the
concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd direction cross
while searching for the 1st concentration distribution which is the
image which picturized the crystal film from the thickness direction one
side, specifies the 1st direction which is the extension direction of a
band-like part using an exposure means and an image pick-up means based
on the image which has the band-like part of two or more trains, and
expresses distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction,
It is test equipment of the crystal film characterized by having a
judgment means to judge the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal
film and to judge poor crystallization of the crystal film based on this

judgment result, based on the distribution property of the 2nd concentration distribution.

[0023]

The crystal film is picturized with an image pick-up means, irradiating light with an exposure means at the crystal film, if this invention is followed. Using these exposure means and an image pick-up means, a concentration distribution calculation means is the image which picturized the crystal film from the thickness direction one side, and specifies the 1st direction which is the extension direction of a bandlike part based on the image which has the band-like part of two or more trains. Then, said concentration distribution calculation means searches for the 2nd concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction while searching for the 1st concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st specified direction. Based on the distribution property of said 2nd concentration distribution, a judgment means can judge the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal film, and can judge poor crystallization of the crystal film based on this judgment result. Moreover, such test equipment is realizable.

[0024]

Based on the distribution property, the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal film is judged about the 2nd concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction which is the extension direction of a band-like part, and the 2nd crossing direction especially. Thus, the distribution property of a concentration value is searched for based on the image which has a bandlike part, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film can be judged based on said distribution property using the functionality between the distribution property of this concentration value, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film. So, property lowering, such as crystal film, for example, conductivity etc., can be judged certainly, without using the Fourier transform etc., for example. That is, in this invention, property lowering of the crystal film can be certainly judged by specifying the microcrystal which becomes the cause of main of said property lowering out of change of a concavo-convex condition, without not inspecting only what has periodicity in said official report about the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film using the Fourier transform like the conventional technique of a publication, but being dependent on the periodicity of the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film. So, versatility of

this test equipment can be made high. [0025]

[Embodiment of the Invention]

Drawing 1 is a flow chart which shows gradually the process which starts the gestalt of operation of this invention and detects the microcrystal of the crystal film. Drawing 2 is the sectional view cutting, expanding and showing a substrate 1 in the thickness direction, and after it forms the crystalline film in the 1 surface section of a substrate 1, it is the sectional view showing gradually the process which forms the crystal film 2 (refer to drawing 3). Drawing 3 is the perspective view of the substrate 1 to which relation with the band-like part 4 is indicated to be the excimer laser annealer 3. This operation gestalt shows an example at the time of applying the test equipment of this invention to the test equipment which inspects the crystalline silicon semi-conductor film (it may only be henceforth indicated as the crystal film) used in case a liquid crystal display is manufactured. The following explanation also includes explanation of the inspection approach of the crystal film. [0026]

The substrate 1 shown in drawing 2 (a) is seen from [which is an electric insulation ingredient / which consists, for example of glass etc.] thickness, for example, the amorphous silicon layer 6 as amorphous film is formed, and it is constituted by surface section 5a of the rectangular plate-like base material 5. Next, as shown in drawing 2 (b), for example, oxidation liquid is applied to 1 surface section 6a of the amorphous silicon layer 6, and an oxide film 7 is formed in it of work of this oxidation liquid. The substrate 1 shown in drawing 2 (c) by which the catalyst deposit 8 was formed in 1 surface section 7a of an oxide film 7 is heated at the more than temperature from which crystallization of the amorphous silicon layer 6 begins, for example, about 550 degrees C, and crystallization of the amorphous silicon layer 6 advances. After crystallization of the amorphous silicon layer 6 advances to some extent, as shown in drawing 3 , the laser light Ra is irradiated to the amorphous silicon layer 6 using an excimer laser annealer. Consequently, the amorphous silicon layer 6 is fused once and is polycrystal-ized through a cooling solidification process. That is, the crystal film 2 is formed in the 1 surface section of a substrate 1. [0027]

Drawing 4 is an outline **** perspective view about the test equipment 9 of the crystal film 2. The test equipment 9 which inspects said crystal film 2 has the xy stage 10, xy stage drive 11, CCD camera 12 (CCD:Charge Coupled Device) as an image pick-up means, the lighting 13 as an

exposure means, and the control unit 14 as a concentration distribution calculation means and a judgment means. The xy stage 10 is constituted possible [adsorption support of a substrate 1]. Moreover, the xy stage 10 is constituted movable in x directions and the direction of y while it is constituted movable in the thickness direction of a substrate 1. Said x directions are directions in alignment with the longitudinal direction of the rectangle-like xy stage 10, and said direction of y is a direction which intersects perpendicularly in x directions and the thickness direction of a substrate 1. xy stage drive 11 is a device which carries out migration actuation of a part of arbitration of the crystal film 2 selectively in a location to be examined to CCD camera 12 and lighting 13. This xy stage drive 11 has x direction actuator 11a in which migration actuation in x directions is possible, and direction actuator of y 11b in which migration actuation in the direction of y is possible for the xy stage 10.

[0028]

CCD camera 12 is supported by thickness direction one side (the arrow mark A1 shows) of a substrate 1, is arranged possible [an image pick-up of the crystal film 2 formed in the substrate 1], and is formed. This CCD camera 12 is constituted possible [an image pick-up of an abbreviation 1mmx1mm rectangle field]. Lighting 13 is used as dark field illumination of dark field microscope 12a used as the lens of CCD camera 12. It becomes possible using these lighting 13 and CCD camera 12 to picturize the crystal film 2 from the thickness direction one side. [0029]

Drawing 5 is the block diagram of the control system of the test equipment 9 of the crystal film concerning the gestalt of operation of this invention. the control unit 14 consists of the microcomputer which carries out reading appearance to arithmetic and program control 15 (it is written as CPU15 CPU:Central ProcessingUnit and henceforth), and read-only memory 16 (it is written as ROM16 ROM:ReadOnly Memory and henceforth), and consists of the write-in storage 17 (it is written as RAM17 RAM:Random Access Memory and henceforth), a bus 18, an input/output interface 19, and an actuation circuit besides a graphic display.

[0030]

CPU15, and ROM16 and RAM17 are electrically connected to the input/output interface 19 through the bus 18. The keyboard 20 and mouse 21 which are CCD camera 12 and an input means are electrically connected to the input/output interface 19, respectively. Moreover, xy stage drive 11, lighting 13, and a display 22 are electrically connected to the

input/output interface 19 through the actuation circuit besides a graphic display, respectively. The concentration distribution property as a distribution property of the 1st and 2nd concentration distribution mentioned later is searched for, and while judging the microcrystal of the crystal film 2, the program which judges poor crystallization of the crystal film 2 is stored in ROM16. This program is performed by CPU15. [0031]

Drawing 6 is a graph showing the relation between laser energy, degree of crystallinity, and surface roughness. When the laser energy of the laser light Ra irradiated to the amorphous silicon layer 6 is lower than a desired value, the degree of crystallinity of the crystal film 2 is lower than 100% of a request, and the surface roughness of the crystal film 2 is also in a low inclination. When the laser energy of laser annealing is suitable, the interior fused with laser energy is dotted with the unmelting section. And since a crystal grows by using said unmelting section as a crystalline nucleus, the diameter of crystal grain serves as a big crystal of several micron meter.

When the laser energy of the laser light Ra to irradiate is higher than a desired value, a microcrystal is generated on the crystal film 2 and the surface roughness of the microcrystal-ized part 28 (refer to drawing 9 a) becomes very low. The microcrystal-ized part 28 is also called the microcrystal part. When said microcrystal becomes excessive [the laser energy of laser annealing], the crystal film 2 fuses thoroughly with said laser energy, and a crystalline nucleus serves as [the diameter of crystal grain] a set of the very small crystal it is [crystal] hundreds of nm at the time of cooling, high density and in order that it may be formed at random and a crystal may grow from each crystalline nucleus.

[0033]

The excimer laser annealer 3 is constituted so that it may oscillate with the pulse number defined beforehand and the laser light Ra may be irradiated. Moreover, the excimer laser annealer 3 is constituted so that the laser rectangle-like light Ra which has the predetermined direction die length of Y and the direction width of face of X of the direction of X which intersects perpendicularly in the direction of Y and the thickness direction of a substrate 1 may be irradiated to the amorphous silicon layer 6 for an exposure. It collaborates in this excimer laser annealer 3, and said xy stage drive 11 or xy stage drive 11 and the drive of an abbreviation EQC, and the laser light Ra is irradiated at said substrate 1, sending the substrate 1 which has the

amorphous silicon layer 6 in the direction of X. [0034]

Thus, sending a substrate 1 in the direction of X with the feed rate defined beforehand, when the excimer laser annealer 3 oscillates the laser light Ra of the shape of said rectangle with the pulse number defined beforehand, the band-like part 4 prolonged in the direction of abbreviation Y is formed in a substrate 1. In this operation gestalt, "the direction of abbreviation Y" includes "the direction of Y." However, when it irradiates with a laser energy value quite smaller than the laser energy value from which desired degree of crystallinity is obtained, it becomes that there is no band-like part 4. Moreover, also when it irradiates with a quite bigger laser energy value than the laser energy value from which the laser energy value from which desired degree of crystallinity is obtained is acquired, it becomes that there is no band-like part 4. For example, the abbreviation equivalent of the bandwidth of each band-like part 4 is carried out to the integral multiple of said pulse number.

[0035]

Drawing 7 is a flow chart which shows gradually how to search for, the extension direction, i.e., band-like direction, of a band-like part. Drawing 8 is a flow chart which shows the detection approach of a microcrystal. Drawing 1 is also explained collectively. bi (i= 10, 11 and 12, --) in ai (i= 1, 2 and 3, --) in drawing 1, drawing 7, and drawing 8 shows a step, respectively. Drawing 9 is drawing for explaining how to search for, the extension direction, i.e., band-like direction, of the band-like part 4, from the image S which has the bandlike part 4. Drawing 9 (a) When performing distributed calculation from Image S to all the distributed calculation directions 23 of predetermined within the limits expected that the band-like direction is included It is drawing in which the distributed calculation direction 23 shows the condition that the band-like directions differ, and is drawing showing the condition that the distributed calculation direction 23 of drawing 9 (b) corresponds with the band-like direction when performing distributed calculation from Image S to all the distributed calculation directions 23 of said predetermined within the limits. All the distributed calculation directions 23 of this predetermined within the limits correspond in the direction of plurality of predetermined within the limits. Drawing 10 is an explanatory view for asking for distribution of the concentration value along the one direction of said directions of plurality about the direction of plurality of predetermined within the limits in two or more locations of the

direction which intersects said one direction. Drawing 11 is drawing for explaining how to specify the one direction of [of the directions of plurality] as the 1st direction, based on the average of the distribution called for for every direction.

[0036]

As shown in steps 1 and 2 of drawing 1, and steps 10 and 11 of drawing 7, some of substrates 1 2, i.e., crystal film, are moved to a location to be examined with xy stage drive 11, and light is irradiated with lighting 13 at said crystal film 2. As shown in drawing 4 and drawing 9, the image S by which the crystal film 2 is picturized from the thickness direction one side of the crystal film 2 with CCD camera 12 is displayed on a display 22. Moreover, the crystal film 2 is picturized in the shape of a straight line along a direction with the band-like part 4 near the direction of abbreviation y. Thus, in step 11, the image S which has the band-like part 4 of two or more trains is obtained. Said image S is temporarily memorized by RAM17.

[0037]

Based on the image S which has the band-like part 4 obtained at step 11, it asks for distribution of a concentration value in the distributed calculation direction 23 about each direction of the predetermined range at step 12. That is, in step 12, it is a direction near the direction of abbreviation y, and asks for distribution of the range until a ycoordinate serves as Ye from all x with the y-coordinate of the image pick-up range mentioned later from Xs in Ys to [x] Xe in the distributed calculation direction 23 to all the distributed calculation directions 23 included in the range of the direction defined beforehand. If it puts in another way, it will ask for distribution of the concentration value along the one direction of said all distributed calculation directions 23 about all the distributed calculation directions 23 of predetermined within the limits expected that the bandlike part 4 is contained. It asks for the average to x of the distribution for which it asked at step 13. That is, it asks for the average of distribution of two or more concentration values along the one direction for which it asked in two or more locations of the direction which intersects said one direction. [0038]

And the phase of asking for distribution of the concentration value along the one direction mentioned above, and asking for the average of distribution of two or more concentration values about all the distributed calculation directions 23 of predetermined within the limits is repeated and performed. A distributed average of the average of said

distribution may be written. Next, at step 14, the one direction of [of all the distributed calculation directions 23] is specified as the 1st direction based on the average of the distribution called for every distributed calculation direction 23 in said phase. That is, the distributed calculation direction 23 which has among the distributed averages to all the distributed calculation directions 23 acquired at steps 12 and 13, the smallest distributed average, i.e., minimum average, is determined as the band-like direction which is the 1st direction. [0039]

Said image pick-up range is synonymous with all the fields ranging from the coordinate (Xs, Ys) to a coordinate (Xe, Ye) among rectangle-like image fields. While said coordinates (Xs, Ys) are parallel, they adjoin in the x directions of a rectangle-like image field at one side of a side, and this one side, and while they are parallel, they show the intersection P1 with one side of a side in the direction of y. It is the intersection P2 used as the vertical angle of said intersection P1, said coordinates (Xe, Ye) are parallel, and also adjoin in the x directions at one side by the side of a way, and this one side, and are parallel and also they show the intersection P2 with one side by the side of a way in the direction of y.

[0040]

Drawing 12 is drawing for explaining how to search for the average concentration value and relative frequency distribution of the band-like direction, from the image which has the band-like part 4. Drawing 13 is drawing for explaining how to select a relative-frequency-distribution concentration value out of the distribution value of accumulation relative frequency distribution. Drawing 14 is drawing showing the image corresponding to the average concentration value distribution of drawing 15, and rate-of-change distribution of drawing 16. Drawing 15 is drawing showing the average concentration value distribution of 1dimensional one corresponding to the image which has the band-like part 4 of drawing 14. Drawing 16 is drawing showing the 1-dimensional rateof-change distribution corresponding to the image which has the bandlike part 4 of drawing 14. Drawing 17 is drawing showing the image corresponding to the relative-frequency-distribution concentration value of drawing 18. Drawing 18 is drawing showing the relative-frequencydistribution concentration value of 1-dimensional one corresponding to the image which has the band-like part 4 of drawing 17. Drawing 19 is drawing for explaining how to judge a microcrystal-ized part, from rateof-change distribution and a relative-frequency-distribution concentration value. Drawing 8 is also explained collectively.

[0041]

At step 15, the 1st concentration distribution which is the average of the concentration value which met the band-like part 4, and is the average of two or more concentration values calculated for every train at least among the band-like parts 4 of two or more trains is searched for. That is, the average concentration value 25 and relative frequency distribution of the range until a y-coordinate serves as Ye from all x with the y-coordinate of said image pick-up range from Xs in Ys to [x] Xe in the band-like direction to the band-like direction acquired at step 14 are calculated (refer to drawing 13). Said average concentration value 25 is equivalent to the 1st concentration distribution.

[0042]

Next, it shifts to step 16 and the average concentration value 25 in every [all] x from Xs obtained at step 15 to Xe is arranged as average concentration value distribution of 1-dimensional one until it results [from Xs] in Xe (refer to drawing 15). Said average concentration value distribution of 1-dimensional one is equivalent to the 2nd concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction. Next, it is the high-pass filter processing expressed with step 17 by the formula (1) to the average concentration value distribution of 1-dimensional ones acquired at step 16, and high-pass filter processing for searching for the rate-of-change distribution mentioned later is performed. High-pass filter processing is synonymous with highpass processing. [0043]

[Equation 1]

H (x) =
$$\sum_{t=x-L}^{x+L} \{ M (t) - M (x) \}$$
 ... (1)

[0044]

About a formula (1), the average concentration value over each x is expressed as M (x), and the rate of change 27 to each x [after high-pass filter processing] is expressed as H (x). The filter size L is beforehand set that rate of change 27 is detectable in order to detect a microcrystal with a sufficient precision. concrete — the filter size L — the scale factor of the substrate feed rate of the excimer laser annealer 3, an oscillation pulse number, the width of face of the shape

of a rectangle of the laser light Ra, and the image pick-up system besides a graphic display, and an image -- it is set from resolution etc. [0045]

As mentioned above, 1-dimensional rate-of-change distribution of the rate of change which extracted the steep average concentration value change in the x directions is arranged by performing said high-pass filter processing in said step 17 (refer to drawing 16). If it puts in another way, processing which eliminates the concentration value below the concentration value defined beforehand will be performed to the average concentration value distribution of 1-dimensional one acquired at step 16. As shown in drawing 8, drawing 17, and drawing 18 after that, in step 18, the concentration value used as predetermined accumulation relative frequency distribution is formed into 1 dimension in x directions, i.e., the 2nd direction. That is, at step 18, the bottom cumulative relative frequency of the relative frequency distribution in every [all] x from Xs obtained at step 15 to Xe arranges as relative-frequency concentration value distribution of 1dimensional one until it results [from Xs] in Xe of the relativefrequency-distribution concentration value 26 which is a concentration value (concentration value used as the value defined beforehand) used as about 20%. The relative-frequency-distribution value of the 1st concentration distribution of this step 18 is equivalent to the phase of searching for distribution of the 2nd direction of the concentration value used as the value defined beforehand. Even when a microcrystal exists in the part in a band-like part in a relative-frequencydistribution concentration value by this, it becomes possible to express the concentration value of a microcrystal. [0046]

Next, as shown in step 3 of drawing 1, drawing 8, and drawing 19, in step 19, counting of the microcrystal is judged and carried out from a predetermined frequency-distribution concentration value and rate of change. Namely, at step 19, it judges whether the location of x is a microcrystal-ized part for every [all] x from Xs to Xe to the 1-dimensional rate-of-change distribution acquired at step 17, and the 1-dimensional relative-frequency concentration value distribution acquired at step 18 from rate of change 27 and the relative-frequency-distribution concentration value 26. For example, when it is lower than a predetermined rate-of-change threshold and said rate of change 27 is lower than a relative-frequency concentration threshold, it is judged with the location of x being a microcrystal. Counting of the number of the location of x which the location of x furthermore judged to be a

microcrystal reached comparatively, and was judged to be a not continuous microcrystal is carried out.

[0047]

The rate of change of the band-like part 4 of the microcrystal picturized from two or more sample substrates is investigated, and said rate-of-change threshold is determined so that the detection precision of a microcrystal may become good as much as possible. Moreover, concentration distribution of the band-like part 4 of the microcrystal picturized from two or more sample substrates is investigated, and said relative-frequency concentration threshold is determined so that the detection precision of a microcrystal may become good as much as possible.

[0048]

Then, in step 4 of drawing 1, when it is said larger rate than the defect judging threshold beforehand defined to the number of the location of x judged to be the microcrystal which the location of x judged to be the microcrystal obtained at step 19 reached comparatively, and is not continuing, and the number, it judges with this crystal film being faulty. The flow of this drawing 1 is ended at step 5 after that. Therefore, according to this test equipment 9, it becomes possible to eliminate, non-wanted the crystal film 2 1, i.e., the defect substrate, of degree of crystallinity. Said defect judging threshold is determined according to detection precision etc.

[0049]

According to the inspection approach of the crystal film 2 explained above, based on the image S which first has the band-like part 4 of two or more trains which picturized the crystal film 2 from the thickness direction one side, the 1st direction which is the extension direction of the band-like part 4 is specified. In a subsequent process, the 1st concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of said 1st direction is searched for, and the 2nd concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction is searched for. In a subsequent process, the existence of the microcrystal which may be generated on the crystal film 2 can be judged based on the distribution property of the 2nd concentration distribution. Poor crystallization of the crystal film 2 can be judged based on the judgment result of said process.

[0050]

Based on the distribution property, the existence of the microcrystal which may be generated on the crystal film 2 is judged about the 2nd

concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction which is the extension direction of the band-like part 4, and the 2nd crossing direction especially. Thus, the distribution property of a concentration value is searched for based on the image S which has the band-like part 4, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film 2 can be judged based on said distribution property using the functionality between the distribution property of this concentration value, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film 2. So, property lowering, such as the crystal film 2, for example, conductivity etc., can be judged certainly, without using the Fourier transform etc., for example. That is, in this operation gestalt, only what has periodicity in said official report about the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film using the Fourier transform like the conventional technique of a publication is not inspected. By specifying the microcrystal which becomes the cause of main of said property lowering out of change of a concavo-convex condition, without being dependent on the periodicity of the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film 2, property lowering of the crystal film 2 can be judged certainly. So, versatility of this inspection approach can be made high. [0051]

Moreover, according to this inspection approach, based on the band-like part 4 prolonged in the direction of the predetermined range beforehand appointed among Images S, the variance of a concentration value is calculated from all the directions of predetermined within the limits, respectively. Then, the average of a variance can be calculated about the 2nd direction and the direction which has the minimum average among the averages of the calculated variance can be specified as the 1st direction. Thus, the 1st concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction can be searched for correctly and easily, without adjusting said CCD camera 12 for picturizing the band-like part 4 to high degree of accuracy, even if there are a mechanical error, an alignment error, etc. of xy stage drive 11 which transport the crystal film 2 1, i.e., a substrate, for example, since the 1st direction which is the extension direction of the bandlike part 4 can be specified as accuracy. Therefore, the 2nd concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction can also be searched for correctly and easily. So, it becomes possible to make the engine performance of this inspection approach high. [0052]

Moreover, according to this inspection approach, as shown in drawing 19 , based on the rate-of-change threshold defined beforehand, respectively and a relative-frequency concentration threshold, the microcrystal-ized part 28 can be specified from the distribution property searched for in the phase of performing high-pass filter processing, and the distribution property searched for in the phase of searching for distribution of the 2nd direction. As especially shown in drawing 19, the concentration rate of change at the time of the energy intensity given to the crystal film 2 increasing from a distribution property, and a microcrystal being generated, and changing a concavo-convex condition can be extracted. And the microcrystal-ized part 28 can be specified based on the value of the rate of change it is determined beforehand that does not extract the concentration rate of change at the time of the energy intensity given to the crystal film 2 decreasing, and changing a concavo-convex condition, and the value of the concentration produced to the part which the microcrystal has generated. [0053]

Moreover, according to this test equipment 9, the crystal film 2 is picturized with CCD camera 12, irradiating light with lighting 13 at the crystal film 2. Based on the image S which picturized the crystal film 2 from the thickness direction one side, the 1st direction which is the extension direction of said band-like part 4 is specified using these lighting 13 and CCD camera 12. Then, the 1st concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st specified direction is searched for, and the 2nd concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction is searched for. Based on the distribution property of said 2nd concentration distribution, the existence of the microcrystal which may be generated on the crystal film 2 is judged. Poor crystallization of the crystal film 2 can be judged based on this judgment result.

[0054]

Thus, the test equipment 9 of the crystal film 2 which becomes possible [judging to accuracy the microcrystal which may be generated on the crystal film 2] is realizable. According to said test equipment 9, property lowering of the crystal film 2 can be certainly judged by specifying the microcrystal constituting the main cause of property lowering of the crystal film 2 out of change of a concavo-convex condition, without being dependent on the periodicity of the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film 2 etc. So, versatility of this test equipment 9 can be made high.

[0055]

Since the energy which judges the excess and deficiency of the energy in laser annealing processing, and is given to a precursor by laser annealing processing based on this judgment result is controllable based on the judgment result, i.e., the degree of crystallinity, obtained by said test equipment 9 and the inspection approach, it becomes possible after that control to realize the degree of crystallinity of the desired crystal film 2.

[0056]

In this operation gestalt, although the step which forms into 1 dimension the concentration value which serves as predetermined accumulation relative frequency distribution mentioned above after step 17 in the x directions was arranged, it is after step 15 and said step may be arranged before step 16. In this case, it shifts to step 19 mentioned later after step 17. Moreover, the same effectiveness as said operation gestalt is done so also in this case. In addition, in the range which does not deviate from a claim, various partial change may be made to said operation gestalt.

[0057]

[Effect of the Invention]

According to this invention, based on the distribution property, the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal film is especially judged about the 2nd concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction which is the extension direction of a band-like part, and the 2nd crossing direction as mentioned above. Thus, the distribution property of a concentration value is searched for based on the image which has a band-like part, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film can be judged based on said distribution property using the functionality between the distribution property of this concentration value, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film. So, property lowering, such as crystal film, for example, conductivity etc., can be judged certainly, without using the Fourier transform etc., for example. That is, in this invention, property lowering of the crystal film can be certainly judged by specifying the microcrystal which becomes the cause of main of said property lowering out of change of a concavo-convex condition, without not inspecting only what has periodicity in said official report about the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film using the Fourier transform like the conventional technique of a publication, but being dependent on the periodicity of the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film. So, versatility of this inspection approach can be made

high. [0058]

Moreover, since the one direction of [of the directions of plurality] can be especially specified as the 1st direction in the 3rd step based on the average of the distribution called for for every direction according to this invention For example, the 1st concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction can be searched for correctly and easily, without adjusting an image pick-up means etc. to high degree of accuracy, in order to picturize a band-like part even if there are a mechanical error, an alignment error, etc. of a means which transport the crystal film. Therefore, the 2nd concentration distribution showing distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction and the 2nd crossing direction can also be searched for correctly and easily. So, it becomes possible to make the engine performance of this inspection approach high. [0059]

Moreover, according to this invention, especially in the 2nd process, processing which eliminates the concentration value below the concentration value beforehand set to average concentration distribution is performed. If it puts in another way, a larger concentration value than said concentration value defined beforehand can be extracted. In the 3rd process, a microcrystal-ized part can be specified from two distribution properties. Thus, specification of the microcrystal-ized part constituting the main cause of property lowering is realizable. [0060]

Moreover, according to this invention, the test equipment of the crystal film which can judge the microcrystal in the crystal film to accuracy is realizable. Based on the distribution property, the existence of the microcrystal in the crystal film is judged about the 2nd concentration distribution which expresses distribution of the concentration value of the 1st direction which is the extension direction of a band-like part, and the 2nd crossing direction especially. Thus, the distribution property of a concentration value is searched for based on the image which has a band-like part, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film can be judged based on said distribution property using the functionality between the distribution property of this concentration value, and the microcrystal generating condition of the crystal film. So, property lowering, such as crystal film, for example, conductivity etc., can be judged certainly, without using the Fourier transform etc., for example. That is, in this invention, property lowering of the crystal film can be certainly judged by specifying the

microcrystal which becomes the cause of main of said property lowering out of change of a concavo-convex condition, without not inspecting only what has periodicity in said official report about the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film using the Fourier transform like the conventional technique of a publication, but being dependent on the periodicity of the concavo-convex condition of the crystal film. So, versatility of this test equipment can be made high.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] It is the flow chart which shows gradually the process which starts the gestalt of operation of this invention and detects the microcrystal of the crystal film.

[Drawing 2] It is the sectional view cutting, expanding and showing a substrate 1 in the thickness direction, and after forming the crystalline film in the 1 surface section of a substrate 1, it is the sectional view showing gradually the process which forms the crystal film 2.

[Drawing 3] It is the perspective view of the substrate to which relation with the band-like part 4 is indicated to be the excimer laser annealer 3.

[Drawing 4] It is an outline **** perspective view about the test equipment 9 of the crystal film 2.

[Drawing 5] It is the block diagram of the control system of the test equipment 9 of the crystal film 2 concerning the gestalt of operation of this invention.

[Drawing 6] It is a graph showing the relation between laser energy, degree of crystallinity, and surface roughness.

[Drawing 7] It is the flow chart which shows gradually how to search for, the extension direction, i.e., band-like direction, of a band-like part. [Drawing 8] It is the flow chart which shows the detection approach of a microcrystal.

[Drawing 9] It is drawing for explaining how to search for, the extension direction, i.e., band-like direction, of the band-like part 4, from the image S which has the band-like part 4. Drawing 9 (a) When performing distributed calculation from Image S to all the distributed calculation directions 23 of predetermined within the limits expected that the band-like direction is included It is drawing in which the distributed calculation direction 23 shows the condition that the band-like directions differ, and is drawing showing the condition that the distributed calculation direction 23 of drawing 9 (b) corresponds with the band-like direction when performing distributed calculation from Image S to all the distributed calculation directions 23 of said

predetermined within the limits.

[Drawing 10] It is an explanatory view for asking for distribution of the concentration value along the one direction of said directions of plurality about the direction of plurality of predetermined within the limits in two or more locations of the direction which intersects said one direction.

[Drawing 11] It is drawing for explaining how to specify the one direction of [of the directions of plurality] as the 1st direction, based on the average of the distribution called for for every direction. [Drawing 12] It is drawing for explaining how to search for the average concentration value and relative frequency distribution of the band-like direction, from the image which has the band-like part 4.

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[Drawing 15] It is drawing showing the average concentration value distribution of 1-dimensional one corresponding to the image which has the band-like part 4 of drawing 14.

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[Description of Notations]

- 2 Crystal Film
- 4 Band-like Part
- 9 Test Equipment
- 12 CCD Camera
- 13 Lighting
- 14 Control Unit
- 15 CPU
- 16 ROM

[Translation done.]

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DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

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[Drawing 19] It is drawing for explaining how to judge a microcrystalized part, from rate-of-change distribution and a relative-frequencydistribution concentration value.

[Description of Notations]

- 2 Crystal Film
- 4 Band-like Part
- 9 Test Equipment
- 12 CCD Camera
- 13 Lighting
- 14 Control Unit
- 15 CPU
- 16 ROM
- 17 RAM
- 28 Microcrystal-ized Part

[Translation done.]

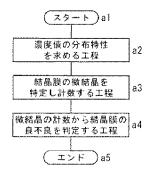
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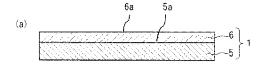
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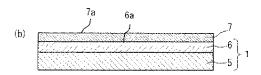
DRAWINGS

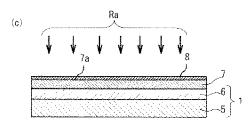
[Drawing 1]



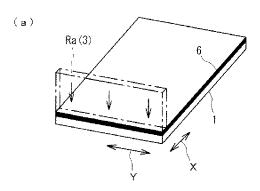
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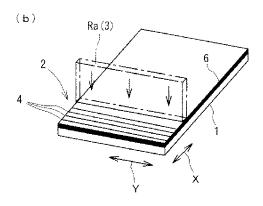




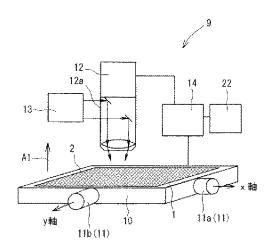


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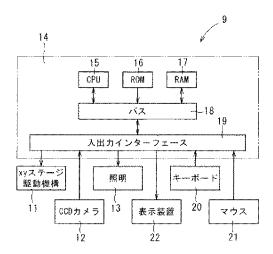




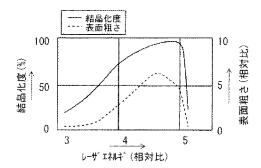
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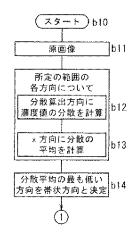
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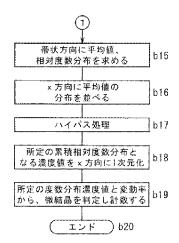
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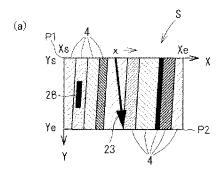
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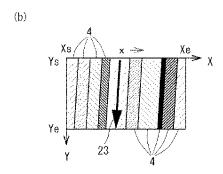


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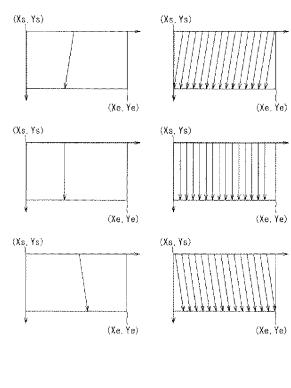


[Drawing 9]

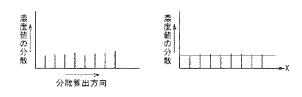


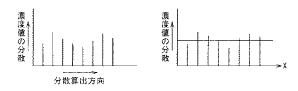


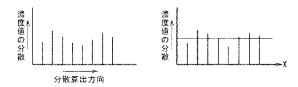
[Drawing 10]



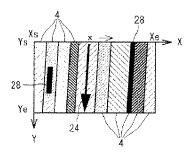
[Drawing 11]



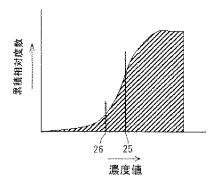




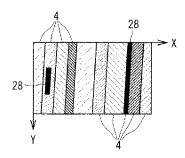
[Drawing 12]



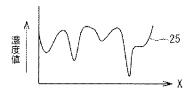
[Drawing 13]



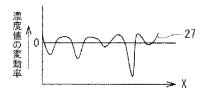
[Drawing 14]



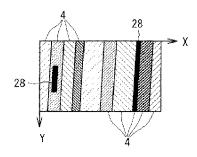
[Drawing 15]



[Drawing 16]



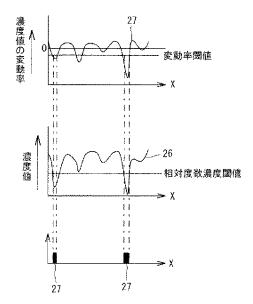
[Drawing 17]



[Drawing 18]



[Drawing 19]



[Translation done.]